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News Release

Release Date: April 7, 2015
Release Number: 15-22

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SBA Administrator Honors Nation's Top Small Businesses

National Winner to be formally recognized in Washington, D.C., May 8

WASHINGTON – Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet, the head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, announced today this year's Small Business Person of the Year winners from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A panel is currently reviewing all the packages and a national winner and two runners-up will be selected and announced at a future date. The national winner will be recognized as the *2015 National Small Business Person of the Year* by the U.S. Small Business Administration this year in Washington, D.C., May 8.

"It is my pleasure and honor to announce the 54 winners. Competition was extremely keen across the nation for these prestigious awards. I couldn't be any prouder than recognizing these outstanding entrepreneurs and small business owners, they represent the backbone of our economy. Small businesses created nearly 2 million of the roughly 3 million private-sector jobs generated in 2014. More than 7 million of the 11 million jobs created during our recovery have been generated by startups and small enterprises," said Contreras-Sweet.

Each year since 1963, the president has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of National Small Business Week. This year National Small Business Week will be recognized from May 4-8 with national events planned in Miami, Los Angeles, San Antonio, New York and Washington, D.C.

The winner of this award for Maine was Heidi V. Neal, owner of Loyal Biscuit Co., a pet product and service business based in Rockland, with additional locations in Belfast, Camden, and Waterville. Ms. Neal was nominated for this award by David Hill of the Small Business Development Center in Wiscasset.

Ms. Neal will be recognized for her success at an SBA reception on May 5th at the Augusta Country Club in Manchester.

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